



RoNetco Supermarkets Inc.

Telecopy - 202-720-3499

January 22, 2003

Country of Origin Labeling Program
Agriculture Marketing Service, USDA
Stop 0249, Room 2092-S
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-0249

Subject: Docket #LS-02-13 Establishment of Guidelines for the Interim Voluntary
Country of Origin Labeling Program

To Whom it May Concern:

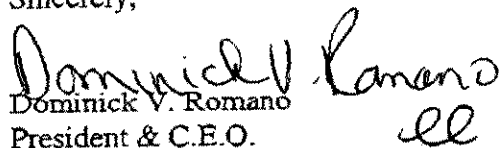
I am writing to you to oppose the Agricultural Marketing Service's request for emergency approval for the record keeping system under this program. As I have stated previously, I believe that suppliers should be held responsible for labeling and record keeping.

We are a family owned supermarket business continually grappling with not only the high costs of doing business, but also being in compliance with a myriad of local, state, and federal regulations.

It is unreasonable to hold our produce, meat, frozen foods, and fish departments (who change hundreds of items on a daily basis) responsible for record keeping and labeling of a product's country of origin. Our associates have no way of knowing where the product originated, and if we were charged with the responsibility of auditing suppliers, we could not unequivocally state to you that the information they provide to us is correct. Labeling and record keeping accuracy must be the responsibility of the supplier.

I urge the Office of Management & Budget to deny emergency approval for the record keeping requirements allowing the food industry to work with the USDA for solutions to this highly complex program.

Sincerely,


Dominick V. Romano
President & C.E.O.

DVR:lal

cc: Executive Committee, Operational Supervisors, General Store Managers, Office
of Management & Budget (telecopy - 202-456-2461), L. Mottese (WFC - 732-
906-5231), DVR:LTRS:1-22CO